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demands my earliest acknowledgments: you have set me gently aside, without pushing me rudely from you.

"As I know from my present feelings, that it is not in my nature to pass suddenly from love to hatred, and as your youth, beauty, and delicate health, are entitled to every attention and kindness possible, you will not, I trust, mistake my motives, when thus, at taking leave, I earnestly beseech you to be cautious in future, how you attempt to raise hopes you are not disposed to realize.

"That you once loved sincerely and ardently, I need not be told: it was indeed from the united testimony of various persons, with regard to your character as a wife, and your conduct since you ceased to be so, that I was induced to make you that offer which has since proved unsuccessful.

"The fortunate man who may be destined to touch your heart, will have my best wishes for the continuance of that life, in which his happiness will of course be involved.

"I have the honour to remain, dear Madam, your most sincere friend and servant."

Florella excused the mistake of Benevolus in favour of his sincerity. Any little resentment he might have felt, evaporated in the gentle reproof of this letter, and she found him through life, a valuable, disinterested, and enlightened friend.

L.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THE mere attachment or indifference that may be shown by particular persons to particular pursuits, amounts to very little in establishing their worth, or in proving

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their insignificance. Even the general current of public opinion should not, in all cases, be resorted to as a proper rule by which to judge.

Particular situations in life, and particular modes of education, may operate very forcibly in giving to the mind a particular bias, and therefore it is but reasonable to judge as liberally as we can of those, who may, from different causes, differ from us on some points of argument; but I believe it will be found, on careful examination, that greater degrees of importance are attached to the consideration of some pursuits, than what the subject will really admit. In this view I consider the essay on Music, in the Magazine for December, signed "Marcellus," and I would wish to make a few observations thereon. In doing which I desire to guard against a censoriousness or narrowness of disposition, too generally indulged when treating of matters which do not exactly correspond with our ideas, or that may not just come up to the standard we have formed. It is neither my business nor intention to condemn that writer for cultivating a taste for music; neither do I wish to deprive him of any gratification he may enjoy in pursuing his favourite amusement; but I very much object to his manner of reasoning on the subject, and to the conclusions he draws.

I think facts could be produced, to prove that the unqualified assertions of which he makes use, are not strictly justifiable. I cannot subscribe to the soundness of the sentiment, that a want of taste in this particular, is characteristic of moral depravity. It would certainly be an unsafe criterion by which to judge the disposition of any man, and as difficult to prove his real character from his possessing or not possessing a taste for music. Depravity of character

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belongs not exclusively either to the one description or the other. I readily admit that many excellent persons exist, who may be found among the number of its warm admirers; and I presume it will not be denied that many excellent persons also exist, who, notwithstanding neither the taste nor the judgment requisite in the cultivation of this art, form any part of their character, are, nevertheless, justly esteemed for their amiable and useful qualities; and that were they to indulge in a taste for this science, it would add nothing to their real worth of character. I do not know that it is any indication of a strong mind, to yield to the powers of music: neither can it be asserted on proper grounds, that to remain indifferent to its effects is an infallible proof of a weak one; but we may be certain that a taste for music is but a trifling preservative against evil habits: for I suppose that among its followers and admirers there may be found as many instances of wrong conduct, and deeds of as deep a dye, as among those who are not so much its strenuous supporters.

Amidst all the rage for music, and the boasted powers of music's charms "to soften rocks, and bend the stubborn oak," we do not find that the reign of folly is much weakened, or that habits of useful reflection are gaining ground. I am inclined to think that music has rather a contrary tendency, and that instead of imprinting useful and solid impressions, there is a danger of the mind suffering very considerably, with respect to the main point of real seriousness. Indeed, to calm the tumult of the passions, to subdue the stubborn will of man, and to direct the movements of the human mind towards the proper sphere of action, requires, in my opinion, an application to something more

solid and substantial than merely a proficiency in the superficial accomplishments of the day.

I much fear that to shine in superficial accomplishments is, with many, more an object of interest, than the acquirement of more valuable and praiseworthy attainments.

I think from general observation, we are warranted in concluding, that if music had a tendency to convey profitable ideas, and to impart instruction, it would not be so much sought after by the light and frivolous: as every thing approaching to solidity appears to be shunned by them with the greatest exactness, and every degree of encouragement given to indulge in a taste for frivolity. Amongst the numerous incitements to keep alive this taste, perhaps it will be found, on careful inspection, that the practice of music is none of the least.

I am far from wishing to encourage gloomy habits, any more than levity of disposition. I believe the mild dictates of genuine religion forbids equally the one as the other, as being equally removed from contributing in any degree to the real improvement of the mind; but I believe, in proportion as we attain to solid, substantial knowledge, and learn how it is to be acquired, every indulgence that has the least tendency to enervate the powers of the mind, and to render it unfit for serious reflection, will, in our estimation, lose its value. It must be acknowledged that music has this effect: "it operates on the passions, and rousing the passions, tends to weaken the powers of reason." To subdue our passions, to conquer the force of evil habits, and to form the mind to piety and virtue, should be the principal struggle of our lives. Here would be scope sufficient to employ all our faculties.

Time would not then hang heavy

on our hands. We would have within ourselves an inexhaustible fund of enjoyment, that would never leave us at a loss for a subject upon which to dwell. We could then bear to be left alone for a few moments, without suffering any lassitude of thought from our own reflections. We would then rationally enjoy existence, without being obliged to fly so often for satisfaction to those trifling, and in many cases, pernicious amusements, that so much occupy the time and attention of the vain and thoughtless. We would then hear less of how we are to spend what is called leisure hours. The theatre, the tavern, the gaming-table, with other ruinous and pernicious modes of killing time, as it is termed, would not so much as be thought of. And even perhaps the practice of music, would, on a proper regulation and renovation of mind and manners, lose much of its wonted charms. "Indeed there is no need to drive that away by foolish diversions, which flies away so swiftly of itself;" and every item of which should be deemed so precious, as to leave no leisure for idle and unprofitable pursuits.

It should be a question of some importance, whether a wise man has any idle hours at all. His time and attention are fully occupied, not in the sordid, groveling, low pursuit of worldly gain, and gratification of his sensual appetites, but in the acquisition of useful knowledge, the knowledge and practice of genuine religion, which teaches all who submit to its wise injunctions, so to pass their time, as at its conclusion to enjoy the pleasing reflection, that they have not altogether lived in vain, but in some degree fulfilled the duties assigned them.

N.S.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

FOURTEENTH REPORT FROM THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN IRELAND.

To his Grace Charles Duke of Richmond, &c. &c. Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,
WE the undersigned, commissioners appointed for inquiring into the several funds and revenues granted by public or private donations, for the purposes of education, into the state and condition of all schools upon public or charitable foundations in Ireland, beg leave to submit to your Grace the result of our anxious deliberations, on the subject of extending and improving the education of the lower orders of the people in this part of the United Kingdom. We have not been deterred from entering upon this subject, by the difficulties peculiar to this country, with which we are aware it is attended, and we have been anxious, as early as possible, to meet the expectations of your Grace and the government of Ireland, whose solicitude on the subject of a plan for the general education of the lower orders of the people of Ireland, to be suggested by this Board, was evinced in the letter addressed to our Secretary, on the 17th day of January, 1811, by your Grace's late principal Secretary, the Right Hon. Wm. Wellesley Pole.

We have applied our efforts to the framing of a system, which, whilst it shall afford the opportunities of education to every description of the lower classes of the people, may, at the same time, by keeping clear of all interference with the particular religious tenets of any, induce the whole to receive as benefits as one undivided body, under one and the